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ENGELSKA

# Teachers' Reflections about Vocabulary Teaching

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**Title:** *Teachers' Reflections about Vocabulary Teaching*

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to compare teachers' opinions about vocabulary teaching to methods described in research and to investigate if there is a correlation between the methods the teachers say they use and their work experience. Furthermore, another aim is to compare teachers' opinions about vocabulary teaching to what the syllabi state. The method used has been qualitative interviews with eight high school teachers. The study suggests that teachers use both systematic and incidental approaches to vocabulary teaching, but the teachers with a longer work experience have a stronger tendency towards a systematic approach to vocabulary teaching. The teachers also share the same opinions about vocabulary teaching regarding extensive reading and learning words in context. Furthermore, communicative methods were only briefly mentioned by some of the teachers. The teachers' answers largely correspond to the description of vocabulary in the syllabi although the syllabi do not discuss vocabulary acquisition explicitly.

**Key words:** vocabulary, vocabulary teaching, systematic approach, incidental approach, work experience, syllabus

# **1. Introduction**

Sweden is a small country and the importance of knowing another language cannot be underestimated, at least if we want to communicate with the 99.7% of the world who speak a different language (Svartvik, 1999:10). In order to be able to communicate with someone, knowing words becomes very important. There are a number of different components of a language that learners need to know, and I find vocabulary a very important part of language acquisition, but something that is not discussed as much as other components such as grammar. However, the British linguist David Wilkins once wrote “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” (Wilkins, 1972, cit. in Shejbalová, 2006:1), and this being so, the focus of this essay is on how teachers reflect on vocabulary teaching. For this eight high school teachers have been interviewed.

## **1.1 Aim and Purpose**

The aim of this essay is to compare how eight teachers’ opinions regarding vocabulary teaching relate to research in the field of vocabulary teaching. The information provided by the interviews will be compared to what the syllabi for English in high school state about vocabulary teaching. Additionally, whether there is a correlation between the work experience of the teachers and their methods in vocabulary teaching will be explored, as among the informants interviewed for this study there are four teachers who graduated comparatively recently and four teachers with more work experience. Furthermore, the topic of extramural English in vocabulary teaching, which is not included in the focus of this study, was highlighted by some of the teachers’ responses and the topic is therefore discussed in Appendix 1.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

- Are methods of vocabulary teaching which are described in research on language acquisition mentioned by the interviewed teachers? Also, which are commonly mentioned and which are not mentioned at all?
- How do the results from the interviews relate to the content of the syllabi for English in high school in relation to vocabulary teaching?
- Is there a correlation between the teachers’ work experience and the way they teach vocabulary?

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Vocabulary Acquisition**

A native English speaker knows, according to Nation and Waring (1997:7-8), approximately 20,000 word families when graduating from university. This number does not include proper names, abbreviations and compound words. A word family is the base word with its inflections and derived forms. When Swedish students finish a compulsory school, they have an active vocabulary of approximately 1,000 words and a passive vocabulary of 1,500-2,000 words, according to Svartvik (1999:277). Nation and Waring (1997:11) suggest that a second language (L2) learner needs to know at least 3,000 high frequency word families. Once these are learned, they recommend the teacher to support students in developing strategies to cope with unknown words which they encounter in texts.

There is not always an exact correspondence between the words in the native language and in the L2, and learning vocabulary also involves understanding the patterns of, for example, morphemic combinations and collocations in a language which serves as a foundation for new knowledge (Pavičić Takač, 2008:16). When the L2 is learned, the learner already has a semantic system and needs to fit the L2 words into it. Sometimes this can be more of a hindrance than a positive thing since words do not always share the exact meanings (Pavičić Takač, 2008:9). Furthermore, Pavičić Takač states that it is “the ability to use conventionalised and predictable language sequences that brings an L2 learner closer to the native speaker” (2008:16-17).

### **2.2 Previous Research**

Today, acquisition of vocabulary is, according to Sökmen (1997:237), considered to play an important role in second language learning, and some even find it the most important part of learning a new language. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are many theories trying to explain processes involved in vocabulary acquisition. The research outlined below is an attempt to summarize it in order to provide a background for the present study, where it will be compared to the interviewed teachers’ reflections regarding vocabulary teaching.

#### **2.2.1 Historical Development**

Even though vocabulary is considered to play an important role in second language acquisition, research has put less focus on teaching and learning vocabulary than on phonology and syntax, according to Zimmerman (1997:5-19). Sylvén (2010:26) shares this

opinion but adds that this has changed over the last 30 years when two different research fields have emerged, a systematic view and an incidental view on vocabulary teaching.

The systematic approach believes that vocabulary should be taught in the same way as other parts of the L2 often are, namely explicitly and structurally. Sylvén (2010:27-28) describes several methods based on a systematic approach to vocabulary teaching, for example, *the Grammar-Translation Method*, *the Direct Method*, *the Audio-lingual Method* and *the Situational Approach*. The incidental approach believes that vocabulary is learned automatically if the learner is exposed to the target language. According to Sylvén (2010:26-29), the incidental approach believes in learning vocabulary in realistic situations in a way similar to that in which L1 is learned. She refers to Krashen (1985, in Sylvén, 2010:28-29) and his belief that the amount of input which the students get in the target language is very important for a successful vocabulary acquisition. Methods that follow the incidental approach are, for example, *the Natural Method* and different immersion programs. Sylvén (2010:26-27) adds that methods used in schools are rarely completely systematic or completely incidental.

### **2.2.2 Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence puts a special emphasis on the social and communicative aspects of language use (Sylvén, 2010:15). Hymes (1972, in Zimmerman, 1997:12) coined the concept communicative competence. In Hymes' theory, communicative competence means the "internalized knowledge of the situational appropriateness of language" (Zimmerman, 1997:12). Zimmerman states that this resulted in a great change in language instruction. Focus was shifted towards being able to communicate rather than knowing the structure of a language. The American linguist Edward Anthony (1973, in Zimmerman, 1997:14), who followed this approach, believed that vocabulary should be learned in its cultural context. This led to a focus on discourse rather than sentences, which has influenced vocabulary teaching.

### **2.3 Strategies for Vocabulary Acquisition**

Schmitt and McCarthy (1997:3) believe that the systematic and the incidental approaches to vocabulary teaching should be seen as complements to each other. They state that the explicit teaching of common words is a useful start, whereas reading can teach the students collocations and usage. Whether you prefer the incidental or the systematic approach, the input the students get in the target language is of utmost importance (Sylvén, 2010:34). The methods described in the following sections are the ones commonly mentioned by the interviewed teachers and the ones highlighted in research about vocabulary teaching.

### **2.3.1 Strategies within Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition**

Nation and Waring maintain that listening is one way to improve vocabulary, and also that “Extensive reading is a good way to enhance word knowledge and get a lot of exposure to the most frequent and useful words” (1997:11). Furthermore, when reading in L2 it is important that you know enough to be able to learn from context. The learner ought to know at least 95% of the words according to Nation and Waring. Other activities in the classroom in which vocabulary is not in focus can also serve to develop students’ vocabulary, for example group work (Nation & Waring, 1997:11). Pavičić Takač (2008:18) writes that the Naturalistic Approach finds guessing the meanings of words based on context an important part of incidental vocabulary learning. The Naturalistic Approach also promotes explicit vocabulary teaching when students first begin to learn the language to help ensure a systematic language development.

### **2.3.2 Acquiring Vocabulary in Communication**

Group activities can benefit vocabulary acquisition because the group members’ shared knowledge of vocabulary is greater than that of its individual members. They can therefore support each other in communication activities. Furthermore, these activities can provide students with meaningful contexts which help make sense of the meaning of words, and thus support memorization. Also, in such activities, learners will actively use new vocabulary. Last, the general atmosphere in group communication activities provides students with more support as they can make mistakes without revealing them to the whole class and the teacher (Nation & Newton, 1997:243-244).

### **2.3.3 Chunks of Language**

According to Lundahl (2009:260), collocation implies knowing which words work well together and the ability to use them in context. Certain words have a greater tendency than others to co-occur. Zimmerman (1997:16-17) describes how lexicographic research has led to an increasing interest in chunks of language as learners need to be able to use and notice patterns of language, rather than remembering rules (Zimmerman, 1997:16-17). Lewis (1997:260) writes that the lexical approach pays less attention to grammatical structures and individual words; it focuses on the students’ awareness of collocations and institutionalized utterances, which suggests working with activities to raise awareness of collocability and working with reception of vocabulary rather than production of it.



### **2.3.4 Extensive Reading**

Lundahl (2009:211-212) describes extensive reading as reading a large amount of texts usually outside school. Advanced L2 speakers will, according to Coady (1997:225), learn more words from extensive reading than from teacher-led instructions. However, Coady (1997:225-227) points out that certain studies prove that vocabulary learning can take place through extensive reading, rather than extensive reading being more beneficial than other kinds of vocabulary instruction. Paribakht and Wesche (1997:174-177) provide examples of other studies that show that reading is not the fastest way for an L2 learner to gain productive language skills. Paribakht and Wesche also state that the process is slow and that it is impossible to say which words will be learned. In order for an L2 speaker to learn a word, it needs to be repeated approximately ten times and clear clues are necessary. Also, most L2 students ignore words they do not know unless these words are needed for specific activities (Paribakht and Wesche, 1997:174-177). Thus, extensive reading is beneficial on its own, but it becomes even more beneficial if it is supported by instructions (Paribakht and Wesche, 1997:195-196).

## **3. Method and Materials**

### **3.1 Data Collection**

A qualitative method has been chosen for this study of teachers' attitudes and reflections on their own strategies of vocabulary teaching. The material has been collected through qualitative interviews with 8 teachers, see Appendix 2. Since these teachers work at the Swedish equivalent of high school, I thought it would be interesting to investigate how they reflect on vocabulary teaching at this fairly advanced level as it is the age level I aim to teach at. The purpose of the interviews has been to:

- investigate what methods the teachers say they use in vocabulary teaching
- find out if the teachers view vocabulary learning as an important part of the students' development in becoming proficient speakers

The qualitative interview, according to Johansson and Svedner (2006:41), can provide a teacher student with useful knowledge about being a teacher and also with information about teachers' opinions. Starrin and Renck (1996:55) state that the purpose of qualitative interviews is to investigate what is happening, rather than to find out how many are doing it in a specific way, for which quantitative methods are more suited. There is a danger in not doing

classroom observations, something Johansson and Svedner (2006:42) mention, because you cannot confirm the information received in the interviews. However, I am interested in how teachers reflect about vocabulary teaching, something that can be discussed in interviews. Furthermore, vocabulary is often taught integrally in other lessons, which would make it difficult to observe within the scope of the present work.

### **3.1.1 About the Interviews**

The semi-structured format used in my qualitative interviews leaves room for adaptations depending on the answers from the interviewees. A decision was made to do the interviews in English or Swedish, depending on what the interviewees said they felt most comfortable with.

Johansson and Svedner (2006:44) write that informants must know the purpose of interviews and also be aware that answers will be anonymous. Moreover, it is important to have the consent of the interviewee to record the interview and ensure him/her that the files will be destroyed after the essay is completed. By using good interviewing technique, the interviewer can, according to Starrin and Renck (1996:58-60), further the interview and create an efficient and productive interaction. In order to create a good interview situation, it is important to be well-versed in literature on the topic. It is also important how the questions are formulated, especially the first ones as they set the tone for the interview, according to Johansson and Svedner (2006:46). I have reflected on this when I formulated my interview questions and completed my interviews.

### **3.2 Selection Process**

In order to find informants, several resources available online on the municipality's web site were used, and I called and emailed to approximately 50 English teachers in Gothenburg. The teachers' work experience was also important, as it was part of my study's aim to investigate whether there were any specific tendencies regarding vocabulary teaching in relation to when the informants were trained to become teachers. In schools, I was able to interview eight teachers.

### **3.3 Informants**

The eight informants come from seven public and private high schools in Gothenburg, giving my study a broad perspective. Four of the informants are women, Beth, Emma, Megan and Amy, and four are men, Ryan, James, Dave and Tim<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, two of the men, Ryan and James, and two of the women, Emma and Beth, have less than ten years of work experience.

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<sup>1</sup> I am just noting the gender factor as there is no gender aspect in this study

The teachers with more work experience are Tim, who has worked for 26 years, Dave and Amy, who have worked for 36 years, and Megan who has worked for 40 years. Two of the informants were native speakers, Ryan and James. I have given the informants fictive names to ensure their anonymity.

### **3.4 Procedure**

The interview questions were formulated on the basis of theoretical background knowledge. Once the questions were completed, approximately 50 teachers were contacted. Out of this group, eight teachers were able to meet for interviews. It is important to consider that I interviewed teachers who volunteered to be a part of my study after they had learned about the topic. This might have influenced my results; possibly the teachers I interviewed were more interested in vocabulary.

Before my first interview, a pilot study with a personal contact was completed. The teacher had previously worked at a middle school and is trained to teach English at that level. I got useful feedback, and I adapted and added questions, for example, I added a question about dictionaries as the informant found it an important factor of vocabulary teaching and I reformulated some questions.

The interviews were completed over a three week period. The interviews took between 15-30 minutes. I also informed the teachers that their answers would be anonymous and the files destroyed after the essay was completed. I transcribed the interviews and surveyed the material in the results section.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Vocabulary Teaching**

During the interviews the teachers were asked to describe their vocabulary teaching, which they did as they answered the questions presented in appendix 2. Also, an example of a transcribed interview is provided in appendix 3. The teachers' answers about how they work with vocabulary fit in along a continuum which starts with a teacher working very systematically with vocabulary and ends with two teachers who do not work with word lists; therefore the presentation of results is structured along this continuum.

To present the interview accounts in a more comparable and topic-structured way, the teachers' answers are grouped into four categories: (1) relevance of vocabulary teaching for language acquisition; (2) classroom activities with the focus on vocabulary; (3) methods of

testing vocabulary acquisition; (4) vocabulary-related homework assignments. Each category of responses is represented by bullet points.

#### **4.1.1 Ryan**

- Ryan divides language teaching into six different components: speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. Vocabulary is equally important compared to the other aspects. However, he believes that working with vocabulary is more important when students start with English, as advanced students soak up words everywhere.
- Ryan is a native speaker and his vocabulary teaching is highly systematic. His students are given twenty words per week. Fifteen minutes each week are spent on word-building. This approach is used during the first two courses in high school. The C-course is different; there is not much work with grammar there and not at all with vocabulary. He believes that context is important as it helps students get a better understanding of words. Their books give valuable support to his vocabulary teaching. Ryan once gave students important words from a general word list, not connected with a text, and it did not work. Furthermore, they work with old literature available online sometimes, because, according to him, “kids have book-phobia”.
- They have a test once they have studied 80 words. It consists of exercises where they fill in missing words and match words with definitions.
- Ryan says that they work with words in class because most of the students will not do homework, however they study for tests.

#### **4.1.2 Megan**

- Vocabulary is the foundation of reading and listening comprehension. Megan says that “if you don’t have the words, the other components don’t matter”.
- Megan’s students learn thirty words weekly. They work with them in various ways, for example by putting them into sentences or by trying to understand them in context. She wants them to be active learners and know how to use the words. The texts come from textbooks, newspapers, TV-shows or movies.

They read three novels in step 5 and in English B. Sometimes they also work with word lists while they are reading. In English C they read a novel and while reading every 50 pages they focused on a word category and learned 30 words. She noticed that this gave her students a deeper understanding of the message of the novel when they analyzed it.

- Learning words in context is important and therefore Megan does not want her students to study word lists for tests. Vocabulary is not a separate part of tests, but comes across in writing assignments or reading comprehension exercises.

•••• Their 30 word-homework is tested in different ways, for example, by translating words or by using them in sentences. Sometimes, the students explain the words in English to one another; they enjoy it and learn different strategies.

#### **4.1.3 Amy**

- Amy finds vocabulary important when language is used at a more advanced level.
- Vocabulary teaching is an integrated part of Amy's teaching and she uses a text book, from which the students read texts and work with word lists. On occasion, they also work with newspaper articles and watch movies in class. Additionally, Amy has a word game which is good to use in the beginning of the semester when students are shy.

Her students find everyday language easy but when it comes to more advanced texts they have problems because they do not read literature voluntarily. Students learn most words from reading texts and literature of a certain category, Amy says.

- Vocabulary is included as a separate part of her tests. Furthermore, she always starts every course with a diagnostic vocabulary test to get an idea of her students' level.
- The students get word lists from the textbook as homework. Amy tests the homework in different ways, for example in writing or as a competition between teams.

#### **4.1.4 Tim**

- Vocabulary is an integrated part of Tim's teaching, and he explains words before, during and after a text is read. Context and culture are also important, since the English-speaking world is our framework as English teachers.
- Vocabulary learning is an on-going process, and Tim follows certain principles. His first-year students, and usually his second-year students, work with the text book during the fall, from which they get 20 words every week.

If vocabulary learning is looked upon as a dynamical process, students do not only learn words from word lists but from working with texts. Tim tries to "step away from what it was like before, when it was words and grammar and texts", instead his students read literature and work with projects. During the spring term his students select their own words from projects, books or cross-curricular projects. Combined with this, he works with self-assessment. Students determine how difficult their chosen words are and whether their knowledge is active or passive.

- Tim tests students' vocabulary all the time, in both regular and unprepared tests. Usually, vocabulary is tested in a separate part.

•••• During the fall, Tim tests his students' weekly vocabulary homework in different ways. In the spring they get more responsibility to learn their own words and he works with "individual voc lists", where students select and learn 10-20 words each week.

#### **4.1.5 Dave**

- Dave tells his students that the words in the text book are not enough for the higher grades and that vocabulary "is the most important part because if you're good at grammar but don't have much of a vocabulary, you cannot say anything, but if you have a good vocabulary but some problems with grammar, you can still express yourself and be understood".

- Vocabulary learning takes place automatically, but students need to be active learners. He only speaks English in class, and whenever someone uses a difficult word, he writes it in English on the board. They define the word, and students write down the word and its translation or definition.

Dave's vocabulary teaching differs depending on the course. The first-year students need to learn to take responsibility, so they work with texts and words, whereas the third-years are given a text and are expected to learn unfamiliar words. He does not use dictionaries in his teaching because his students do writing assignments at home; the time in school is valuable, and students can do individual tasks at home. Dave works with study techniques to learn vocabulary, especially with his first-year students.

With literature he wants his students to learn words so his 30 students bring in 10 words each and he puts together a list. During English C, Dave works with "active word learning outside school", for this, students select words to learn. They choose words from conversations with English-speakers or various media to activate their word learning outside school.

- Dave finds vocabulary so important that he puts all the words from the word lists on the first tests. The vocabulary part of the test can be to explain words, but often there can also be a translation section. In English C he does a large vocabulary test.

- The first- and second-year students work with texts and word lists as homework, whereas third-year students take own responsibility for words they do not know. He rarely tests the homework in third grade, compared to the first and second years. He often uses a written test or a dialogue. They do this as a group activity also.

#### **4.1.6 Emma**

- Vocabulary is an important part of Emma's teaching since the syllabus states that the language should be varied and coherent. Furthermore, she says variation and vocabulary is more important for the higher grades.
- Emma works at two different schools, and her vocabulary teaching differs depending on school because one of them uses text books. She teaches an English C-course without a text book this semester.

She recently let her students read two movie reviews where words had been underlined. The students looked up what these words meant in the specific context and learned the words as homework. She thinks it is productive to work with monolingual exercises and not translate words, because when you define words in English, you expand your vocabulary. Recently they watched an online video, and prior to watching it Emma gave the students a few words to look up. Her vocabulary teaching is always connected to what they are working with. She also finds reading very efficient to increase vocabulary. It is a part of the syllabus for English C to work with books, so her students read one book, but they did not work with vocabulary. Emma recommends students to do intensive reading.

At one of Emma's schools they often work with cross-curricular activities, which frequently include new vocabulary for the students.

- Emma says students' knowledge of vocabulary shows in their writings and reading and listening comprehension.
- The words from the movie reviews were tested with gap sentences and in an exercise in which students combined words with correct definitions in English. Last year when she had a text book, students sometimes used word lists. Working with word lists can be beneficial because students need to be able to sit down and study.

#### **4.1.7 James**

- James, a native speaker of English, describes vocabulary as "one of the most important things, obviously", but also "the most difficult one to actually find time to carry out in the classroom". He also says that you need "the glue of grammar".
- He adapts his vocabulary teaching to the program he teaches and to the students' goals. James works with vocabulary in context at a sentence or text level. He believes it is beneficial to introduce new vocabulary at all stages of the learning process and vocabulary is included during every class. One way to work with vocabulary before the national tests is by using

reading comprehension activities and teaching students strategies which they can use when they encounter unknown words.

When they read texts, James usually writes a few difficult words on the board and goes through them after they have finished reading. He says that “context is pretty much everything” because of the variety of meanings words can have. James also works with extensive reading as it is required in the syllabi. However, you have to be careful with older literature as some students may incorporate the outdated language in their everyday vocabulary. James also does not want students to look up every unfamiliar word because then it will be difficult to finish the book. Students have to be active, and in terms of reading he believes that they “soak up words” if they see them repeatedly. James finds reading the best way to improve students’ vocabulary. He suggests to students who want to improve their vocabulary to look at news stories online.

••• His students’ vocabulary is tested in a mid-term structured similarly to the national tests. James considers vocabulary to be a part of the writing test.

•••• James’s students get vocabulary exercises as homework sometimes.

#### **4.1.8 Beth**

- Beth states that it is important to work with students’ vocabulary because there is a progression between the three courses. A good vocabulary is important to be able to express your thoughts.

- Teaching vocabulary is an integrated part of Beth’s lessons, and students work in different ways. Sometimes they use a text book but often they use computers instead. Prior to the national tests, they do activities which focus on reading comprehension and one word gaps. After these activities they discuss why certain words are appropriate in the given context. They discuss definitions when they encounter new words. When she notices that a student has problems with the basic vocabulary she often recommends the student to read books and look up words.

They always talk English in class, and her students are allowed to talk quietly in English to one another while they are working. Recently they have worked with newspaper articles and her students on the technology program also got to write a game manual to their own fictitious computer game.

Personally, Beth never liked working with word lists in school, but preferred learning vocabulary through books. Extensive reading is a good way to develop vocabulary even though not all students look up unfamiliar words; they still come in contact with many words



and see them in context. Her students read one novel each course. Almost all her students are proficient English speakers because of playing computer games and having online friends. Their playing has improved their vocabulary but not always their grammar.

••• Beth does not mention if she tests vocabulary.

•••• Beth does not refer to any specific vocabulary homework. She fears that if you work with word lists students only learn words in that specific context.

## 4.2 Syllabi

In high schools, teachers presently work with English 5, English B and English C, but as they will soon work with the syllabi for English 5, 6 and 7, I have chosen to analyze them. To see what the new syllabi state is interesting in comparison to what the teachers say. Perhaps, changes need to be made in their vocabulary teaching when the new syllabi are implemented.

Lundahl (2009: 259) mentions that he finds it strange that the old syllabi did not discuss vocabulary acquisition, considering how important vocabulary acquisition is. The commentary materials to the new syllabi state that vocabulary development is a part of developing communicative skills (Skolverket, 2012b:5). Therefore, it is included in the following section from the syllabi: “Students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills” (Skolverket, 2012a:1).

The syllabi for English 5, 6 and 7 do not use the word *vocabulary* but they contain instructions which can be related to vocabulary teaching. The aim of the subject is the same for all three courses, and it is stated that the courses should develop students’ knowledge of language so that they have the ability and confidence in using English in different situations and acquire productive, receptive and interactive communication skills. The students should also be allowed “to develop correctness in their use of language in speech and writing, and the ability to express themselves with variation and complexity” (Skolverket, 2012a:1). Furthermore, students should develop the ability to solve problems in order to support communication. In the syllabi for English 5, 6 and 7 it is evident that the students are expected to be better at understanding input and produce more advanced and varied output themselves to reach higher grades. In English 7, more focus is put on connections to “theoretical and complex subject areas” related to the students’ education. Literature is also mentioned in all three syllabi as well as other kinds of instructions.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Methods of Vocabulary Teaching: The Interviewed Teachers' Practices and Previous Research**

#### **5.1.1 Words in Context**

All the teachers mention that it is important to learn words in context, and that studying words in texts is one way to help students understand that the same word can mean different things in different contexts and sentences. This is in line with the lexicographical research described by Zimmerman (1997:16-17) which has shown that it is important for learners to notice and be able to use patterns in the language, rather than learn rules. However, no one mentioned that they worked actively with collocations to new words, which is a part of this approach. James and Beth state that they do not believe in word lists and prefer working with vocabulary in context at a sentence or text level. The two who put more focus on vocabulary than grammar were Megan and Dave, who said that vocabulary is more important than grammar, because without vocabulary you cannot make yourself understood.

#### **5.1.2 Extensive Reading**

Another common strategy was to use extensive reading. However it was usually not combined with any explicit vocabulary instruction, nevertheless literature is still beneficial. Only, Megan and Dave worked with vocabulary in connection to literature. As described in the background, research suggests that advanced L2 learners achieve more from extensive reading than teacher-led instructions (Coady, 1997:225). There is also evidence that suggests that students learn more vocabulary from extensive reading if they get support from teaching (Paribakht and Wesche, 1997:195-196). The fact that most of the teachers believe in reading without explicit vocabulary instructions suggests that they believe in incidental vocabulary acquisition. This is supported by the two native speakers, James and Ryan, who both say that students “soak up words” everywhere. James also says that reading is one of the best ways to develop your vocabulary, which is something that Amy, Beth, Emma and Tim also mention.

#### **5.1.3 A Systematic Approach to Vocabulary Teaching**

Even though Ryan believes that students “soak up words”, which is in line with the incidental approach, he combines that with the systematic approach. He uses the word systematic to describe his vocabulary teaching. There are several other teachers who describe that they work with texts and word lists connected to the text regularly, and they also appear to have a systematic approach to vocabulary teaching, even though they do not explicitly say so

themselves. Dave and Tim work with word lists but have also begun to use words which the students encounter in other places as homework. I see the way they are trying to activate students' vocabulary acquisition as a way to strengthen the incidental learning in a way similar to working actively with vocabulary while reading literature. None of the teachers seem to only prioritize a systematic approach in teaching vocabulary; they combine it with the incidental approach, for example, when reading literature.

#### **5.1.4 An Incidental Approach to Vocabulary Teaching**

Emma, James and Beth lean more towards the incidental approach since they do not work regularly with word lists. Beth does not work with word lists at all, but she works with reading comprehension and one word gaps prior to the national tests. Beth also says that they discuss why certain words fit where they do and they discuss definitions of words when they encounter new ones. James works similarly to Beth prior to the national tests and furthermore his students get some vocabulary exercises to do at home. In general, however, his vocabulary teaching seems to be more incidental and it does not include working with word lists. James also teaches students strategies regarding how to work with new words they encounter in texts. Emma says that she sometimes includes word lists, but generally her approach appears to be incidental. Pavičić Takač (2008:18) writes that the Naturalistic Approach find strategies such as guessing the meanings of words on the basis of context an important part of incidental vocabulary learning.

#### **5.1.5 Learning Vocabulary through Communication**

In light of the research on the topic it was surprising that no teacher highlighted communicative methods in acquiring vocabulary, although it was implied by several of them. Thus, Beth says that her students are allowed to talk to each other in the classroom as long as they do not disturb the rest of the class using English. Tim mentions that certain words the students learn come from group projects. Some teachers also mentioned that the students quiz one another on their homework, in which communicative aspect is implied. I believe that the teachers do not think of group work as an activity in which students are learning new vocabulary in the way Nation and Newton (1997:243-244) describe. They state that the members of a group support each other in communication activities because they know more words together and that these activities give students a meaningful context in which they can learn vocabulary. Dave is the only one who, to a certain extent, emphasizes the importance of communicative ways of vocabulary learning when he says that he does not like to do long

writing tasks in school because the time spent in classroom is valuable since students there have the opportunity to communicate with each other.

## **5.2 Vocabulary Teaching in Syllabi and Teaching Practices**

The teachers' answers are in line with the new syllabi, however it cannot be determined from a short interview all the ways they work with vocabulary; I can only know what the teachers have reported to me. However, the things they have mentioned are what they find most important about vocabulary teaching. The new syllabi for English 5, 6 and 7 do not mention vocabulary but as described in the result section many different areas of the syllabi are related to vocabulary acquisition.

### **5.2.1 The Aim of the Subject**

The way the teachers say they teach agrees with the aim of the subject, which is to develop students' language skills. The syllabi do not specifically tell the teachers how to develop students' vocabulary, therefore teachers can decide upon their own strategies. Even though the teachers use a variety of different methods they are all in line with what the syllabi state, as long as the end results are that the students have developed their vocabulary, which is outside the scope of this essay. Another part of the aim is for students to develop strategies to solve situations when they do not know how to express themselves. The teachers who mention that they work with teaching students different comprehension strategies are James, Beth, Dave and to a certain extent Emma, however that does not necessarily mean that the other teachers do not work on these aspects.

In the syllabus for English 7, more focus is put on connections to "theoretical and complex subject areas" related to the students' education. This could be an area which some of the teachers need to develop since only a few of them mentioned teaching vocabulary relevant to the students' specific program.

### **5.2.2 Active Learners of Words**

Interestingly, almost all of the teachers point out how important it is for students to be active learners of words. Some of the teachers take it one step further and say that by being active, the students develop their productive skills, which is part of the aim of the subject. All of them except Ryan mention that they encourage reading outside the classroom, which can be seen as a way to be an active learner outside school. Literature is highlighted in the syllabi, and all the teachers mention that they include literature in their teaching. They also mention extramural English (*i.e.* English learned outside the classroom situation), see Appendix 1.

### **5.2.3 How the Interviewees Connect Their Answers to the Syllabi**

In the syllabi for all courses a progression between E and A is evident regarding how well students are expected to understand English and also use it in writing and speaking. Emma motivates why vocabulary is an important part of her teaching by saying that the syllabus states that the language should be varied and coherent. She also mentions that variation is more important if students are aiming towards the higher grades. Beth says that there is a progression from the first course to the third, as one of the reasons why she finds vocabulary important. No specific questions about the syllabi were asked during the interviews, hence the reason why only two teachers mentioned it.

## **5.3 Work Experience and Methods of Vocabulary Teaching**

### **5.3.1 Systematic or Incidental Approaches to Vocabulary Teaching?**

Three of the teachers in the group with less than ten years' work experience, Emma, James and Beth, seem to be in favor of the incidental approach to vocabulary teaching since they do not work with word lists in the same systematic way as the others do for most parts of their courses. However, no one can be placed completely in one category. Thus, Emma, James and Beth still have certain systematic tendencies in their teaching. What stands out is that the four teachers with more work experience say that they work with a text book and word lists at least for parts of their courses. So, teachers with more work experience seem to be more likely to use a more systematic approach to language teaching than teachers with less work experience. This can also be connected to what the teacher training program was like when they were teacher trainees.

### **5.3.2 Different Methods Used Compared to Work Experience**

Testing is an area where the teachers differ. Ryan, Amy, Dave, and Tim all test vocabulary regularly. The only one out of the teachers who tend to prioritize a more systematic approach but does not explicitly test vocabulary is Megan. She says that students' knowledge of vocabulary comes across when they write or understand texts or speech, which is similar to what Emma says. James tests students' vocabulary in a mid-term, in a similar way to the national tests. He considers vocabulary a part of the writing test.

All of the teachers state that context is very important when learning vocabulary, therefore this has no relation to work experience. Two of the teachers describe that they work actively with vocabulary during extensive reading, Megan and Dave. Both of them belong to the category of teachers with more work experience.

### **5.3.3 Vocabulary Teaching: An Individual Matter?**

Interestingly, Ryan and James teach at the same school but at different locations in Gothenburg. They have both worked less than ten years, yet their teaching styles differ a great deal, revealing that individual preferences determine how they teach vocabulary. However, there seems to be a connection between work experience and teaching methods for teachers with more work experience, whereas among teachers who graduated more recently there are more individual practices.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study has shown that there appears to be a correlation between work experience and the methods used in vocabulary teaching. All the teachers with more work experience tend to follow a more systematic approach to vocabulary teaching which possibly can be explained by the teacher training courses which they took as teacher trainees. However, in contrast to this tendency, one of the teachers with less work experience used the most systematic approach out of all the informants, which suggests the importance of individual preferences. Furthermore, there is no complete correlation between work experience and how the informants test vocabulary. Thus, Megan, one of the teachers with more experience, does not test vocabulary whereas the other teachers in her group do. At the same time, there are aspects in which all the teachers agree. In regards to the importance of learning words in context and to the benefits of extensive reading to develop vocabulary, the teachers are in complete unison. The differences in methods of vocabulary teaching can be seen as a continuum from a systematic approach to an incidental approach. The teachers with more work experience are more likely to follow the systematic approach, whereas three of the teachers with less experience can be placed towards the other end along the continuum. I had expected more teachers to have a communicative approach to vocabulary teaching. Also, the teachers all work in connection to the syllabi.

Something that caught my attention was that Beth said that she never enjoyed working with word lists when she was in school, and now she does not apply this method in her teaching. An interesting topic for further study would be to investigate how the teachers' own schooling influences the way they teach and what they have been taught about vocabulary teaching. Furthermore, it would be interesting to complement the findings of the present study with classroom observations with focus on vocabulary teaching.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Extramural English

This section is about English students come in contact with outside school (extramural English). How the teachers find that it has influenced students' vocabulary is relevant to my study as it is a new aspect that can be implemented in methods used by teachers to teach vocabulary. But it is not included in my study since it was not necessary to answer my research questions. It is interesting to see if the teachers have noticed the benefits of extramural English, its influence on students' vocabulary and if they use it as a resource in their teaching.

Sundqvist (2009:2-3) describes students' encounters with English outside school as growing drastically since the 1990s. Despite this change, the report from Skolverket in 2004 (in Sundqvist, 2009:2-3) shows that teaching methods did not change, and most students were not encouraged by teachers to use English resources outside school. Also, the described report showed that students with higher grades said they learned as much English outside school as in school, whereas students with lower grades said they learned most of it in school. However, other studies have not had the same outcome, therefore there is no definite correlation between extramural English and school grades (Sundqvist: 2009:4-5).

In her study, Sundqvist (2009:209-211) noticed a relationship between vocabulary and the amount of extramural English which the students encountered. The connection was clearer among boys than girls, and she states that the reason was because boys actively used English online or in games, whereas girls mainly were passive recipients of English. Also in Sylven's (2010:220) research, it is evident that extramural English has a great effect on students' vocabulary. Her study showed that boys had a larger vocabulary than girls and she draws the conclusion that their free time activities influenced this. Another decisive factor was how much reading the student did outside the classroom in the target language.

## Results

### *Ryan*

Ryan says that boys who play computer games often have a rich vocabulary, even though they cannot always use it. They look up words which they do not know because they want to finish games. When they read literature for English class they find it online as his students do not enjoy working with actual books.

### *Megan*

Megan maintains that her students have improved their listening comprehension skills compared to 25 years ago. However, this has not necessarily improved their understanding of words. Megan uses different media in her teaching, for example, TV shows and movies.

### *Amy*

Amy recommends her students to watch movies with English subtitles in their spare time. She does not encourage her students to use the Internet to improve their vocabulary, but sometimes Amy does use computers during the lessons. One thing Amy says has changed over the years is that students do not read as much literature anymore and therefore find more advanced language difficult.

### *Tim*

Tim has noticed a gender-related difference in his students: boys are usually better at vocabulary and reading comprehension as they play games and use the Internet more. Girls are better at expressing themselves. This comes across in the national tests as well. Compared to the time when he started teaching, his present students are better at English because of globalization. His students also read literature in their spare time. Tim says that to become a proficient speaker the Internet is not enough.

### ***Dave***

During English C, Dave works with “active word learning outside school”, for this, students select words to learn. They choose words from newspapers, TV, song lyrics, or conversations with English-speakers to activate their word learning outside school. Dave does not actively encourage his students to use the Internet.

He has noticed that students have a better pronunciation and are better at expressing themselves in English compared to 20 years ago. However, he suspects that their vocabulary has not improved because students are not as study-motivated. Students have a large receptive vocabulary, but their productive vocabulary is not as large. In English C he does a large vocabulary test and the results on that test are, in a best case scenario, equal to what they were 20 years ago.

### ***Emma***

Emma recommends students to do intensive reading and work with, for example, a paragraph in their spare time. She has noticed that some students have a larger vocabulary, often because they play games or read a great deal. She encourages students to use the Internet to find synonyms and to make sure a word works in a specific context. She also likes to use monolingual dictionaries online, otherwise many students use Google Translate on their phones. Furthermore, she recommends her students to use the forum on word reference where people answer your questions. She has also told her students to try doing a Google search to find out if you can use a word in a certain way. In her teaching she uses online resources a great deal since she does not work with a text book.

### ***James***

James finds reading to be the best way to improve students’ vocabulary. He suggests to students who want to improve their vocabulary to look at news stories online on BBC. With regards to extramural English he says that students are so comfortable with, for example, gaming English that he wants to broaden their horizons and make them understand that the kind of English used in computer games is not acceptable everywhere. James encourages his students to use the Internet to improve their vocabulary, but he also tells them to consider the sources and the style of the language.

### ***Beth***

Almost all Beth’s students are proficient English speakers because of playing computer games and having online friends and therefore she does not work with word lists. Their playing has improved their vocabulary but not always their grammar. Sometimes extramural English even has a negative influence on students’ knowledge of grammar. Beth’s students use the Internet a great deal and do not need to be encouraged to do so. One benefit with this is that they dare to speak, compared to her old classmates.

## ***Syllabi***

According to the syllabi the teaching should “help students develop language awareness and knowledge of how a language is learned through and outside teaching contexts.” (Skolverket, 2012a:1).

## **Discussion**

Many of the teachers say that extramural English has had a large effect on students’ English. Ryan and Tim mention that boys often have a richer vocabulary than girls because they are active computer players. Sundqvist (2009:209-211) revealed in her study that students’ amount of extramural English and vocabulary were more closely connected among boys because their extramural English is often active, which Sylvén (2010:220) also states. This confirms what these teachers also have noticed.

Tim would say that his students have gotten better at English because of globalization and modern technology. Whereas when Megan compares students’ English to 25 years ago she believes that they have better listening comprehension today, but they have not improved their vocabulary at the same rate. Amy says that as soon as the language is more advanced students have issues with it because they do not read as much literature any more. Dave has noticed that students have a better pronunciation and are better at expressing themselves today, compared to 20 years ago. However he does not think their vocabulary has developed in the same way. Students might even have a smaller vocabulary because they are not as willing to study, he says. The students understand more English because they have a great deal of input but they cannot use the words themselves.

Dave works actively with the extramural English the students come across outside school in what he calls “active word learning outside school”, where students select words they come across. He believes it is a good way to make their word learning outside school active, since students need to listen for words and then write them down. I believe this is one way to fulfill the goal in the syllabi to help the students understand how English is learned outside a teaching context. Otherwise, this is an area where I believe the teachers can improve, at least based on the responses I got that relate to vocabulary. Just over half of the teachers say they encourage students to use the Internet as a resource. However, everyone except Ryan mention that they encourage reading outside the classroom, which is as another way for learning to take place outside school.

## **Appendix 2. Interview Questions**

### **2.1 In English**

Name:

Education:

Age:

Years of teaching:

School:

Have you taken any teaching courses after you became a teacher:

Or attended any lectures on the topic?

1. Based on your experience, how important do you find vocabulary in language teaching?
2. What role does vocabulary play in order for a person to become a proficient speaker of a language?
3. Can you describe one of your typical vocabulary lessons?
4. Is vocabulary learning a separate or an integrated part of your lessons?
5. How do you incorporate vocabulary teaching during your English lessons?
6. What kind of methods do you use to teach vocabulary?
7. Which method/s do you find most efficient in teaching vocabulary?
8. What is the student's role in vocabulary learning?
9. Do you test the students' knowledge of vocabulary? How?
10. During what times in the learning process is it useful to introduce new vocabulary?
11. What roles do context and culture play in teaching vocabulary?
12. Do you use or do you encourage your students to use the Internet to enrich their vocabulary? If so, how?
13. Do you work with dictionaries? In that case, how? Otherwise, why not?
14. People are saying that students learn more outside the classroom than inside it, what effects does it have on vocabulary? Also have you noticed this? Do you use this in any way?
15. Anything you want to add?

## 2.2 In Swedish

Namn:

Utbildning:

Ålder:

År som lärare:

Skola:

Har du studerat efter att du blev lärare?

Eller besökt några föreläsningar relevanta för ämnet, alltså ordförråd?

1. Baserat på din egen erfarenhet, hur viktig del av språkundervisningen är arbetet med att utöka elevernas ordförråd?
2. Vilken roll spelar ordförrådet för att en person ska bli en skicklig användare av ett språk?
3. Kan du beskriva en av dina typiska lektioner för att utveckla elevernas vokabulär?
4. Är undervisningen för att utöka elevernas ordförråd en integrerad eller separat del av dina engelskalektioner?
5. I så fall, hur integrerar du arbetet med att utveckla elevernas ordförråd i din undervisning?
6. Vilka metoder använder du för att utöka elevernas ordförråd?
7. Vilken metod tycker du är mest effektiv?
8. Vilken är elevens roll för att utöka sitt ordförråd?
9. Testar du elevernas ordkunskap? Hur?
10. Under vilken del av lärprocessen är det mest positivt att introducera nya ord?
11. Vilka roller spelar sammanhang och kultur i undervisningen för att utöka elevernas vokabulär?
12. Använder ni under lektionerna eller uppmanar du eleverna att använda sig av internet för att utöka sitt vokabulär? Om ja, hur? Om nej, varför inte?
13. Använder du ordlistor i din undervisning? Hur i så fall? Annars, varför inte?
14. Det sägs att eleverna lär sig mer utanför klassrummet än i det, vilket inflytande märker du att detta har på elevernas vokabulär? Har du lagt märke till detta? Använder du dig av detta i undervisningen?
15. Har du något du vill lägga till?

### Appendix 3. Example of Transcribed Interview

A: Så då, baserat på din erfarenhet hur viktig del av språkundervisningen är arbetet med att uttöka elevernas ordkunskap?

B: Mycket viktig

A: På vilket sätt?

B: Är det bara engelska du frågar om?

A: Ah, i huvudsak engelska, jag jobbar ju med engelska så det är ju framför allt det som jag är nyfiken på

B: Jag tycker det är jätteviktigt

A: Mm

B: Jag kan ju inte värdera det i procent

A: Nej det är ju väldigt svårt. Vilken roll spelar ordförrådet för att en person ska bli en skicklig användare av ett språk?

B: Jag tycker det, jag brukar säga till eleverna att det är den viktigaste delen för att om du är jätteduktig i grammatik men inte har något ordförråd så kan du inte säga någonting men om du har ett bra ordförråd men har lite dålig grammatik så kan du ju ändå uttrycka dig och bli förstådd och du kan prata med, och jag framför allt i engelska c som jag har, jag börjar alla kurser med att poängtera hur viktigt det är, så det klargör jag i augusti när jag börjar med eleverna. Och i engelska c så gör jag övningar för att stimulera intresset, jag försöker få dem att tycka att det är kul att lära sig ord va.

A: Hur kan dom övningarna se ut då?

B: Jag kan säga så här att till nästa gång ska ni komma allesammans och ta med fem nya ord som ni har lärt er och då ska det va, jag kallar det active word learning outside school, det ska inte va från böcker det ska inte va från skolböcker, det ska va från andra källor, det kan vara från tidningar, möjligtvis, men det kan också va från tv eller från sångtexter och det kan vara från konversationer med andra engelsktalande och ord som liksom står ut. Framför allt tv är en bra grej och video och sånt där. Då lyssnar man aktivt och det, hör ni ett ord så skriv ner det ordet, sen kommer dom hit då så har dom lektionen, dom skall tala med sin kompis i grupper och så ska dom förklara i vilken situation dom hörde ordet och vad dom gjorde för någonting för att ta reda på det. Sedan ska dom ge exempel på hur man använder det och se om dom andra kan gissa, till slut ska dom då också översätta ordet. Vi jobbar mycket med det i engelskan C

A: Hur kan dom se ut på andra lektioner alltså typiska lektioner när du jobbar med vocabulary?

B: När det gäller ordinläring säger jag från början i alla mina årskurser att det räcker inte med de ord som står i boken, om ni lär er alla ord som står i alla texter så kommer ni att klara kursen men med det kan ni aldrig få dom höga betygen, kanske ett vg, men nu är det ju andra betyg. Ska man ha ett bra betyg så måste man ha mer ord och dom får mer, dom lär sig mycket ord ändå genom att automatiskt höra, men jag menar aktivt, man måste ha ett aktivt lärande av ord. Och ett sätt som jag gör är att på lektionerna så pratar vi ju engelska hela tiden, jag pratar engelska hela tiden och dom också, men jag pratar ju mest det går inte

komma ifrån och varje gång jag använder ett ord som jag tror att dom inte kan så skriver jag det på tavlan och har man varit lärare ett tag så vet man vilka ord som eleverna inte kan.

A: Ah, det kan jag tänka mig

B: Och då göra jag så att jag avbryter mig och så skriver jag ordet på tavlan på engelska och jag skriver det bara på engelska, och senast igår var det en elev som fråga kan du inte skriva den svenska översättningen, nej jag gör inte det för att jag vill att dom ska vara aktiva, dom ska vara på och själva vara med, vi översätter ordet också. Så jag skriver acquaintance, sedan frågar jag eleverna, hela tiden en dialog, någon som vet vad det betyder, ja det betyder bekantskap då. Så dom ska skriva ner en svensk översättning, jag kan inte hålla på och förklara alla ord, ibland gör jag det, men ofta kör man med översättning för det är så mycket snabbare va. Men på det här viset så menar jag på att efter en bra lektion ska det stå ett antal ord, 10,15, 20 ungefär framför allt när det är konversationsövningar efter ett lov och så här när man berättar mycket, jullov, vad har ni gjort under julen? Så kommer det massa med ord på tavlan va. När året är slut så ska dom ha ett anteckningsblock med alla ord som dom skrivit upp och dom orden kommer jag inte förhöra, dom kommer inte komma på något prov, men det innebär inte att de inte ska, de ska alltså gå tillbaka till dom då och då och kolla på sin lista så dom har lite koll på dom själva liksom va, det är ett sätt att jobba med ord.

A: Ah, hur ser det ut när ni kanske arbetar med texter och så? Hur jobbar ni med orden då?

B: Ah, vi är ju så då att det är lite olika beroende på vilken årskurs, i årskurs ett i engelska så handlar mycket om att få in dom i läsläsningen, då vill jag att dom ska läsa texter och ordinläring, som jag hjälper dom med i början, medan däremot i trean så ger jag dom bara en texten, men det ingår att dom ska kunna orden och jag förhör det ibland, men nu har jag mindre sådana i trean, men i ettan och tvåan har jag det. Och i ettan går jag noga igenom i början också studieteknik, hur man lär in ord från en gloslista, hur man gör en gloslista, man sätter upp spalter, hur man förhör sig själv, och hur man inte gör det misstaget som nästan alla gör att man, för att läsa in glosor för dom vill ju gärna dom e ju pigga på att läsa in glosor, det är inte det som är felet utan dom har fel teknik, det kanske är 35 glosor

A: Mm

B: Och så förhör dom sig själva, det fattar dom ju. Ett fel dom gör är att dom börjar med svenska till engelska, man ska alltid börja tycker jag med engelska, det är lättare och förstå orden, först engelska- svenska, sen tillbaka, då har man lärt sig någonting, sen ska man naturligtvis pricka för dom orden man inte kan, för dom orden man kan ska man inte lära en gång till. Nästan alla elever läser dom 35 orden och så har man kommit till slutet och så inser man att det var många ord jag inte kunde här nu va, jag får ta om hela lista, alla 35 ord, fortfarande många ord jag inte kan, jag får ta om hela listan, alla 35 orden, det tar en fruktansvärd tid

A: Mm

B: Sortera bort dem du kan, så utav dom 35 orden så kunde du redan 15 ord, markera dom du inte kan och markera sedan ytterligare så att du snabbt kommer ner till vilka ord du har svårast för. Mycket kan man lära med ren studieteknik alltså.

A: Ah, absolut, vilken är elevens roll för att utöka sitt ordförråd?

B: Ja, det är ju då att verkligen jobba med, jag förhör alltså, några läxförhör, inte alltid, men mest så förhör jag glosorna, då då tycker jag det är väldigt trevligt att ha en dialog, jag



beskriver ett ord eller ber dom att beskriva ett ord och så vidare och ibland, ofta får dom sitta i grupper och beskriva för varandra några ord ur texten. Och så får dom andra gissa. Öhm, någongång kan jag gå in och bara be dom översätta och så, när dom har lärt orden så kan man jobba med dem och skriva, sen har jag ibland skriftliga läxförhör och det har jag olika varianter också, antingen översätta eller förklara på engelska eller sådär va.

A: Är vocabulary en del utav proven också?

B: Det är det, och där, jag tycker det är så viktigt att jag vill ha alla ord som har förekommit, säg att man har engelska i ettan då, där man har första proven i alla fall är fokuserat på texterna och glosorna, och då vill jag att alla ska plugga in glosorna och då får dom poäng för det. Och då har jag väl lagt likadant där så att jag har vissa förklaringsord men jag har också rena tio ord eller något sånt där på engelska, översätt till svenska, och det tror jag inte är så populärt i skolvärlden. Men jag tycker det är viktigt ändå. Och det är så snabbt och enkelt och jag skulle kunna skriva flera sidor med hela tiden sådana här förklaringar med luckor i va men det är lite jobbigt. Jag tycker man ska kunna orden svart på vitt ändå.

A: Öhm, en lite annorlunda fråga här, under vilken del av lärprocessen är det mest positivt att introducera nya ord? Så om man har en text är det positivt att introducera orden innan eller efter man har läst den, eller samtidigt?

B: Bra fråga, det är sådant man får fråga sig när man

A: Men hur gör du?

B: Ah, jag brukar ju faktiskt, öhm, och det gäller framför allt i franska då va, men även i engelska i ettan, det skiljer sig alltså mellan a-kursen och c-kursen. Jag tycker det är bra att läsa orden före, och det är klart att det är inte alltid enligt alla regler så att, alla ord ska alltid komma i sammanhang, men jag menar på alltså att plugga in orden märk att dom sitter och sedan gå på texten för då har du den fördelen att då kan dom, då kan du läsa hela texten, den kommer naturligt, om du gör så här att du tänker att alla orden måste komma i sammanhang då börjar du med texten och så får du titta i gloslistan och så får du gå tillbaka till texten och så fram och tillbaka

A: det blir lite stökigt?

B: Ja, många säger ju det att man ska läsa texten och så se orden där va, men det kan man väl göra sen, det är väldigt bra att ha pluggat in glosorna separat tycker jag.

A: Mm

B: Kanske lite att, jag kan inte se någon skada i det alltså

A: Nä. Det går ju in i nästa fråga då. Vilka roller spelar sammanhang och kultur i undervisningen för att utöka vokabuläret då?

B: Ah, det måste vara, jag har några som sa tidigare att några tycker det är roligt med ord, man kopplar till franska, engelska –franska mycket, jag kopplar till svenska naturligtvis, jag kopplar till latin kanske ibland, och naturligtvis kopplar adjektiv till verb och till substantiv och ger dom, snackar kring orden va, och kulturen naturligtvis, det kan vara olika stil det kan vara slangord, det kan vara att massakera orden, det kan vara olika sammanhang och så får man ut det mesta när det gäller orden tycker jag.

A: Ah, precis. Under lektionerna, använder ni internet eller uppmanar du eleverna att använda sig av internet?

B: Nä, där är jag dålig, jag är gammeldags, nä, öhm, nä det gör jag inte

A: Använder du ordböcker i undervisningen?

B: Nä, det gör jag faktiskt inte heller, utan dom får ju på proven ibland när dom skriver uppsats får dom ha ordböcker, jag gör inte den typen av övningar, de flesta skriftliga övningar vill jag att eleverna gör hemma och har klara så att vi kan diskutera dem sen, jag tycker det är sån onödig tid, om man säger sätt dig ner och gör den här övningen nu, det kan jag göra ibland, tar det 20 min av en lektion att dom ska sitta där och skriva, det kan dom göra på annan tid, jag tycker våran tid på lektionerna är för dyrbar, på lektionerna vad har dom där, dom har mig, jag kan förklara, jag kan förhöra, jag kan leda, jag kan fördela, jag kan sätta igång grupper, dom har varandra, vi har den muntliga delen va. Det har dom inte hemma, dom kan inte sitta och diskutera och prata om en text med någon annan. Men skriva en övning, skriva en övningsuppsats det gör dom alltid hemma, jag ger dem aldrig tid att skriva en övningsuppsats på lektionen, det är många som gör så. Men jag tycker, jag gör andra saker.

A: Sista frågan, det sägs att eleverna nuförtiden med internet och så, dom får så mycket input utanför klassrummet, märker du av detta jämfört med när du började undervisa?

B: Ah

A: På vilket sätt märks det?

B: Rent allmänt så märks det på en bättre förmåga hos eleverna att uttrycka sig på engelska, det är stor skillnad från 80-talet, dom har ett bättre uttal, dom hade mycket större problem med uttalet jag fick jobba med child och cheap och sånt. Dom gör inte så mycket sådana fel idag, några stycken. Dom läser bättre, dom uttalar bättre, däremot ordförrådet, är inte så säkert att det är så mycket bättre därför att jag tycker ändå att själva uthålligheten och energin att plugga liksom att dom klagar mer, dom tycker att 30 glosor är mycket va. Dom var mer beredda att läsa dom 30 glosorna för en 20-30 år sedan va.

A: Mm

B: Och om jag säger till dom, en annan sak som jag har glömt och säga är när dom läser böcker. Så vill jag nästan alltid att dom ska lära sig ord va, jag har kört mycket med det, men det funkar inte riktigt så bra, förr så sa jag så här, nu när ni läser en bok så ska ni ta ut 100 glosor ur boken. Fördelen har varit att det är 100 egna glosor, som ni tycker är bra och som ni har valt och som ni tycker är intressanta, sen så förhör jag dom individuellt. Och det funkade, och eleverna kom med sina listor. Det är ett stort jobb men det va jättebra. Dom protesterar mot det, dom tycker 100 är för mycket, kan vi inte ta 75? Och kan vi inte ta 50 och så? Och sen har jag gjort en annan variant, nu det sista, ta ut 10 glosor och om alla kommer med 10 glosor så, det är ju 30 elever, så får vi 300 glosor så gör jag en gloslista på det, så tar vi en lek och kollar varandra, en tävling på det här. Jag vet inte, för jag tror att det vanligaste sättet att läsa en bok är att inte slå upp en glosa alls, likadant när man tittar på tv, man slår inte upp någonting. Man jobbar inte aktivt med det. Vad får dom då, dom får ett bra, dom förstår, dom jobbar med sin läsförståelse, dom får ett hyfsat begrepp om vad saker och ting handlar om, men dom får inte ett aktivt ordförråd, dom kan inte producera ord själva. Och då vill jag att dom skall, om dom då tvingas liksom att sätta sig ner och på olika sätt lära sig själva ord så tror jag att det är ett bra sätt. Man måste tycka det är lite kul också, jag försöker stimulera dom. Men det går trögare, det är en annan generation av elever. Vi hade bättre elever på

skolan för en 10-15 år sedan. Många tycker det är jobbigt att plugga och sådär va, dom tycker dom har mycket annat, och dom tycker det är ett tråkigt jobb att plugga ordkunskap. Så jag är nog inte så säker på, du frågade om dom är bättre idag, alltså talförmågan är bättre, uttalet är bättre, men, och dom har ett begränsat ordförråd för dom har hört så mycket så dom kan röra sig med det, men igår hade jag test i engelska c, och dom har idag också ett stort vocabulary test, word test, massa olika övningar, bara för att utröna vad har dom för ordförråd

A: Typ som en diganos? Nä, det är ett prov?

B: Det är ett prov, det är en del när jag testar olika förmågor, jag har uppsatsskrivning, jag har läsförståelse och jag har olika saker va. Och sen har jag en som är inriktat på ordförrådet. Och det tyckte dom va kul. Jag har olika varianter, man kan ju testa det på olika sätt, man kan ha luckor och så vidare, och det skulle jag tro utan att ha kollat noga att om dom skulle gjort som jag har idag till exempel och jämföra med ett liknande prov för 10 år sedan, 20 år sedan, så skulle jag inte vara så säker på att dom har bättre resultat, det kanske i bästa fall är likvärdigt, men dom läser en del och dom har hört en del men det finns risk för att det är lite sämre för dom pluggar lite sämre.

A: Mm, men det är väldigt intressant faktiskt. Men har du något du vill lägga till om arbetet med ordförråd?

B: Jag tycker jag fick med det mesta jag

A: Ja, det var verkligen intressant

B: Öh, att stimulera det här med ordinläring med olika lekar man kan till exempel ha grupplekar med ordförklaringar och då får dom lappar med ett ord och så ska dom förklara det. Och så får dom poäng, det tycker dom är kul.

A: Hur gör du när dom läser en text eller när dom ska plocka ord från tv:n, hur gör du för att dom ska välja ord som är utmanande istället för något dom redan kan?

B: Det är, det klarar dom, det säger jag till dom, ni får inte komma med ord som, om dom kommer in med en egen ordlista och så står det surprise är lika med överraska, det kan ni, det har ni lärt er i femman, det har hänt någon gång, då säger jag gå hem och gör om den listan

A: Ah

B: Det ska vara interesting words, roliga ord, intressanta ord, det fattar dom vad det innebär, jodå. Speciellt eftersom det är dom i trean som får denna uppgiften i ordkunskap. Och även i framför allt ettan och tvåan, dom dom fixar det. Dom inser ofta vad det är för ord, någongång kan de ta jättekrångliga ord, det här är ett ord som jag aldrig kommer att använda, då tar dom inte med det.

A: Nä, ja, men tack så jättemycket för att du tog dig tid!